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UNCLAS BANGKOK 001163

SIPDIS

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PACOM FOR FPA HUSO

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: EMBASSY/STATE DEPARTMENT HUMAN RIGHTS VETTING FOR:
EXERCISE BALANCE TORCH (BT) 05-2

REF: JUSMAG THAI MEMO DATED 3 FEBRUARY 2005.

11. This is an action request.

12. JUSMAGTHAI has requested that the Embassy/State Department complete human rights vetting for units that have been selected to participate in Exercise Balance Torch (BT) 05-2 from 11 April - 3 June 2005. To meet internal DOD advance deployment deadlines, they have requested that the review of human rights reports and files be completed no later than eight weeks prior to the exercise, if possible.

13. The Embassy possesses no credible evidence that any of the units listed below in paragraph four have committed gross violations of human rights. The Embassy has important information, contained in paragraph 5, about one of the units. Please advise whether the Department has any relevant information on the units listed in paragraph four below.

14. Participants in the Exercise are as follows:

ROYAL THAI ARMY UNITS

Special Warfare Command, 1st Special Forces Division, 1st Special Forces Regiment
- (approx. 20 personnel)

1st Army Area, 1st Infantry Division, 1st Infantry Regiment
(approx. 440 personnel)

2nd Army Area, 3rd Infantry Division, 3rd Infantry Regiment
(approx. 220 personnel)

4th Army Area, 5th Infantry Division, 25th Infantry Regiment
(approx. 220 personnel)

ROYAL THAI NAVY

HQ, Special Warfare Group (approx. 50 personnel)

15. Thai media reports indicated that members of the 25th Infantry Regiment were involved in the April 28, 2004 assault upon militants holding the Krue Sae Mosque in Pattani Province. 32 militants who had occupied the mosque and who were part of a series of regional attacks against Thai Government institutions and murders of Thai officials were killed by Thai special forces who stormed and retook the mosque. An independent commission was set up by the Royal Thai Government to investigate the incident and concluded that excessive force was used in retaking the mosque. The investigation did not name the 25th Infantry Division as having committed human rights violations. MG Surapun Wongthai, G-3 for the Royal Thai Army, has assured JUSMAGTHAI that no members of the 25th Infantry Division have been implicated, or are expected to be implicated, with excesses associated with retaking the mosque. Post notes that an added feature of the training these units will receive in this exercise is an expanded human rights training course. Embassy Bangkok Political Counselor Robert J. Clarke is the verifying officer for the Embassy/Department of State.

BOYCE